

Message Text

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ACTION ACDA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-08 ISO-00 DODE-00 ACDE-00 AECE-00 INRE-00

SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 AEC-05 CIAE-00 H-01 INR-05

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SAJ-01 SAM-01 SP-02 SS-15 TRSE-00 RSC-01 NSC-05 /068 W

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5422

INFO USDEL MBFR VIENNA IMMEDIATE

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USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 14467

E.O.11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PARM, NATO

SUBJECT: UK POSITION ON SOVIET FIRST STEP

REF: (A) MBFR VIENNA 384, (B) STATE 243492

1. WE DISCUSSED UK POSITION ON SOVIET FIRST STEP PROPOSAL WITH ROBIN MCLAREN OF FCO ON NOVEMBER 6. WE USED ARGUMENTS IN REF (B) IN DISCUSSION.

2. MCLAREN SAID THAT HMG HAS NO DISAGREEMENT WITH OTHER MEMBERS OF WESTERN GROUP ON SUBSTANCE USSR PROPOSAL. UK AGREES THAT PROPOSAL IS NOT ACCEPTABLE AND IS NOT GOING TO TAKE POSITION THAT IT IS A "SUPER PROPOSAL" AND SHOULD BE GIVEN FAVORABLE CONSIDERATION BY ALLIES.

3. UK'S PROBLEM, MCLAREN SAID, IS ALMOST ENTIRELY WITH TACTICS. MCLAREN SAID UK BELIEVES IT WOULD BE TACTICALLY WRONG TO MAKE A LONG, CONSIDERED AND POLEMICAL STATEMENT IN NOVEMBER 7 MEETING BECAUSE:

A) THE RUSSIANS ARE MAKING AN EFFORT TO CHARACTERIZE THE
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OCTOBER 31 PROPOSAL AS AN IMPORTANT STEP. THEY ARE MAK-

ING DEMARCHES IN CAPITALS TO EMPHASIZE THIS POINT. ALLIES SHOULD GIVE IMPRESSION THAT PROPOSAL IS NOT BEING REJECTED OUT OF HAND. PROPOSED STATEMENT MIGHT WELL DO JUST THAT.

B) ARGUMENT THAT ALLIES HAVE BEEN INFORMED ABOUT PROPOSAL IN INFORMAL SESSIONS AND SHOULD THEREFORE BE PREPARED TO RESPOND QUICKLY IN PLENARY IS NOT VALID. RUSSIANS HAVE MADE OTHER PROPOSALS IN INFORMALS WHICH WERE NOT FOLLOWED UP IN PLENARY.

C) THERE IS A REAL DISTINCTION BETWEEN INFORMALS AND PLENARIES. WHILE IT IS APPROPRIATE TO RESPOND TO INITIATIVES IN INFORMALS IN A TOUGH, EVEN ABRASIVE MANNER, SPEECHES IN PLENARY SHOULD BE MORE MODERATE IN TONE. THE PROPOSED NOVEMBER 7 STATEMENT WAS TOO POLEMIC IN NATURE FOR FCO SENSIBILITIES.

4. WE NOTED THAT THERE WAS SOME SPECULATION THAT THERE MIGHT BE UNDERLYING UK POLICY REASONS FOR UK POSITION ON THIS ISSUE. MCLAREN SAID UK RECOGNIZED THAT OTHERS MIGHT QUESTION WHETHER THIS ISSUE RELATED TO UK DEFENSE REVIEW ON WHICH PRELIMINARY HMG DECISIONS JUST REACHED-- HE ASSURED US THAT THIS IS NOT THE CASE. UK REASONS ARE EXACTLY AS STATED.

5. ONLY OTHER ASPECT, MCLAREN SAID, IS THAT FCO FELT IT WAS BEING RUSHED BY AHG ON THIS ISSUE. UK DEL VIENNA DOES HAVE A GREAT DEAL OF AUTHORITY ON TACTICAL ISSUES BUT THIS IS SUBJECT TO REVIEW IN LONDON. IN THIS CASE HMG FELT AHG PUSHING TOO HARD FOR EARLY COMPREHENSIVE POSITION.

6. MCLAREN SAID THREE FLASH MESSAGES RECEIVED FROM UK MBFR DEL MORNING OF NOVEMBER 6. HE HOPES FEVERISH WORK NOW GOING ON IN VIENNA WILL RESULT IN AGREEMENT ON SOME STATEMENT FOR NOVEMBER 7 WHICH WHILE LESS FULL THAN PROPOSED TEXT MAY BE SOMEWHAT MORE SUBSTANTIAL THAN ORIGINAL UK DESIRES FOR NO STATEMENT.

7. COMMENT. MCLAREN HAS ALWAYS SPOKEN FRANKLY WITH US ON DELICATE MBFR ISSUES. WE BELIEVE HIS DISCLAIMER OF CONFIDENTIAL

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HIDDEN MOTIVES. UK POSITION IS CONSISTENT WITH PERSONALITY OF UK MBFR TEAM LONDON (TICKELL, ET AL) WHICH HAS ALWAYS TAKEN STRONG POSITIONS ON PROCEDURAL ASPECTS OF NEGOTIATIONS. END COMMENT.

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